

KENDRA S. CANAPE (SBN: 259641)
kcanape@grsm.com
JOEL D. BRODFUEHRER (SBN: 343092)
jbrodfuehrer@grsm.com
GORDON REES SCULLY MANSUKHANI, LLP
5 Park Plaza, Suite 1100
Irvine, CA 92614
Telephone: (949) 255-6950
Facsimile: (949) 474-2060

Attorneys for Defendant
IQ DATA INTERNATIONAL, INC.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NAZIR POPAL,

Plaintiff,

vs.

I.Q. DATA INTERNATIONAL, INC.; and
DOES 1 through 10 inclusive,

Defendants.

No.: 2:24-cv-00659-KJM-JDP

Judge: Hon. Kimberly J. Mueller
Magistrate: Hon. Jeremy D.
Peterson

**STIPULATED PROTECTIVE
ORDER AS TO DISCOVERY
ONLY**

(PVC VERSION 4/20)

☒ Check if submitted without
material modifications to PVC
form

Complaint Filed: 3/1/24

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS

Discovery in this action is likely to involve production of confidential, proprietary, or private information for which special protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecuting this litigation may be warranted. Accordingly, the parties hereby stipulate to and petition the

1 Court to enter the following Stipulated Protective Order. The parties
 2 acknowledge that this Order does not confer blanket protections on all
 3 disclosures or responses to discovery and that the protection it affords from
 4 public disclosure and use extends only to the limited information or items that
 5 are entitled to confidential treatment under the applicable legal principles.¹

6 1.2 GOOD CAUSE STATEMENT

7 **This action is likely to involve materials and information that I.Q. Data**
 8 **International, Inc. (“IQ Data”) maintains as confidential for which special**
 9 **protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than**
 10 **prosecution of this action is warranted. IQ Data may be producing**
 11 **documents to Plaintiff that consist of, among other things, confidential**
 12 **business or financial information, trade secrets, information regarding**
 13 **confidential business practices, or other confidential research, development,**
 14 **or commercial information, information otherwise generally unavailable to**
 15 **the public, or which may be privileged or otherwise protected from**
 16 **disclosure under state or federal statutes, court rules, case decisions, or**
 17 **common law. IQ Data has maintained this information as confidential due**
 18 **to the sensitive nature of the information. IQ Data’s competitors would gain**
 19 **an improper advantage if documents were made public, including but not**
 20 **limited to customer information, account notes, intellectual property,**
 21 **research, technical, commercial, or financial information, business plans,**
 22 **business policies, training materials, and other business-related information**
 23 **that are not generally available to the public. The debt collection industry**
 24 **and consumer reporting agencies are highly competitive and require**
 25 **confidentiality of very sensitive consumer information. Plaintiff will also be**
 26 **producing materials relating to or regarding Plaintiff’s debt(s), credit**

27
 28 ¹ This Stipulated Protective Order is substantially based on the model protective order provided under the PCV and Hon. Mueller’s Procedures.

1 history, credit reports, documents containing Plaintiff's social security
 2 number and date of birth. Plaintiff has alleged he has suffered harm that
 3 could result in production of sensitive medical information, banking
 4 records, personal identity information, income tax returns (including
 5 attached schedules and forms), W-2 forms and 1099 forms, and personnel or
 6 employment records.

7 Accordingly, to expedite the flow of information, to facilitate the
 8 prompt resolution of disputes over confidentiality of discovery materials, to
 9 adequately protect information the parties are entitled to keep confidential,
 10 to ensure that the parties are permitted reasonable necessary uses of such
 11 material in preparation for and in the conduct of trial, to address their
 12 handling at the end of the litigation, and serve the ends of justice, a
 13 protective order for such information is justified in this matter. It is the
 14 intent of the parties that information will not be designated as confidential
 15 for tactical reasons and that nothing be so designated without a good faith
 16 belief that it has been maintained in a confidential, non-public manner, and
 17 there is good cause why it should not be part of the public record of this
 18 case.

19 **1.3 Acknowledgment of Procedure for Filing Under Seal.**

20 The parties further acknowledge, as set forth in Section 12.3, below, that
 21 this Stipulated Protective Order does not entitle them to file confidential
 22 information under seal; Civil Local Rule 14179-5 sets forth the procedures that
 23 must be followed and the standards that will be applied when a party seeks
 24 permission from the court to file material under seal.

25 There is a strong presumption that the public has a right of access to
 26 judicial proceedings and records in civil cases. In connection with non-
 27 dispositive motions, good cause must be shown to support a filing under seal.
 28 *See Kamakana v. City and Cnty. of Honolulu*, 447 F.3d 1172, 1176 (9th Cir.

2006), *Phillips ex rel. Ests. of Byrd v. Gen. Motors Corp.*, 307 F.3d 1206, 1210–11 (9th Cir. 2002), *Makar-Welbon v. Sony Elecs., Inc.*, 187 F.R.D. 576, 577 (E.D. Wis. 1999) (even stipulated protective orders require good cause showing), and a specific showing of good cause or compelling reasons with proper evidentiary support and legal justification, must be made with respect to Protected Material that a party seeks to file under seal. The Parties’ mere designation of Disclosure or Discovery Material as CONFIDENTIAL does not—without the submission of competent evidence by declaration, establishing that the material sought to be filed under seal qualifies as confidential, privileged, or otherwise protectable—constitute good cause.

Further, if a party requests sealing related to any ~~dispositive~~ motions, briefs, pleadings, deposition transcripts, other papers to be filed with the Court incorporate documents or information subject to this Order, or trial, then the party filing such papers shall designate such materials, or portions thereof, as “Confidential,” and then compelling reasons, not only good cause, for the sealing must be shown, and the relief sought shall be narrowly tailored to serve the specific interest to be protected. *See Pintos v. Pac. Creditors Ass’n*, 605 F.3d 665, 677–79 (9th Cir. 2010). For each item or type of information, document, or thing sought to be filed or introduced under seal in connection with a dispositive motion or trial, the party seeking protection must articulate compelling reasons, supported by specific facts and legal justification, for the requested sealing order. Again, competent evidence supporting the application to file documents under seal must be provided by declaration.

Any document that is not confidential, privileged, or otherwise protectable in its entirety will not be filed under seal if the confidential portions can be redacted. If documents can be redacted, then a redacted version for public viewing, omitting only the confidential, privileged, or otherwise protectable portions of the document, shall be filed. Any application that seeks to file

documents under seal in their entirety should include an explanation of why redaction is not feasible.

2. **DEFINITIONS**

2.1 Action: *Nazir Popal v. I.Q. Data International, Inc.* (Case No: 2:24-cv-00659-KJM-JDP).

2.2 Challenging Party: a Party or Non-Party that challenges the designation of information or items under this Order.

2.3 “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items: information (regardless of how it is generated, stored or maintained) or tangible things that qualify for protection under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c), and as specified above in the Good Cause Statement.

2.4 Counsel: Outside Counsel of Record and House Counsel (as well as their support staff).

2.5 Designating Party: a Party or Non-Party that designates information or items that it produces in disclosures or in responses to discovery as “CONFIDENTIAL.”

2.6 Disclosure or Discovery Material: all items or information, regardless of the medium or manner in which it is generated, stored, or maintained (including, among other things, testimony, transcripts, and tangible things), that are produced or generated in disclosures or responses to discovery in this matter.

2.7 Expert: a person with specialized knowledge or experience in a matter pertinent to the litigation who has been retained by a Party or its counsel to serve as an expert witness or as a consultant in this Action.

2.8 Final Disposition: the later of (1) dismissal of all claims and defenses in this Action, with or without prejudice; and (2) final judgment herein after the completion and exhaustion of all appeals, rehearings, remands, trials, or reviews of this Action, including the time limits for

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1 filing any motions or applications for extension of time pursuant to
2 applicable law.

3 2.9 In-House Counsel: attorneys who are employees of a party to this
4 Action. In-House Counsel does not include Outside Counsel of Record or
5 any other outside counsel.

6 2.10 Non-Party: any natural person, partnership, corporation, association,
7 or other legal entity not named as a Party to this action.

8 2.11 Outside Counsel of Record: attorneys who are not employees of a
9 party to this Action but are retained to represent or advise a party to this
10 Action and have appeared in this Action on behalf of that party or are
11 affiliated with a law firm which has appeared on behalf of that party, and
12 includes support staff.

13 2.12 Party: any party to this Action, including all of its officers, directors,
14 employees, consultants, retained experts, and Outside Counsel of Record
15 (and their support staffs).

16 2.13 Producing Party: a Party or Non-Party that produces Disclosure or
17 Discovery Material in this Action.

18 2.14 Professional Vendors: persons or entities that provide litigation
19 support services (e.g., photocopying, videotaping, translating, preparing
20 exhibits or demonstrations, and organizing, storing, or retrieving data in
21 any form or medium) and their employees and subcontractors.

22 2.15 Protected Material: any Disclosure or Discovery Material and all
23 information derived therefrom (including, but not limited to, all testimony
24 given in a deposition, declaration or otherwise, that refers, reflects or
25 otherwise discusses any information designated “Confidential” that is
26 designated as “CONFIDENTIAL.”

27 2.16 Receiving Party: a Party that receives Disclosure or Discovery
28 Material from a Producing Party.

1 **3. SCOPE**

2 The protections conferred by this Stipulation and Order cover not only
3 Protected Material (as defined above), but also (1) any information copied or
4 extracted from Protected Material; (2) all copies, excerpts, summaries, or
5 compilations of Protected Material; and (3) any testimony, conversations, or
6 presentations by Parties or their Counsel that might reveal Protected Material.

7 Any use of Protected Material at trial will be governed by the orders of the
8 trial judge. This Order does not govern the use of Protected Material at trial.

9 **4. TRIAL AND DURATION**

10 Even after final disposition of this litigation, the confidentiality obligations
11 imposed by this Order will remain in effect until a Designating Party agrees
12 otherwise in writing or a court order otherwise directs. Final disposition will be
13 deemed to be the later of (1) dismissal of all claims and defenses in this Action,
14 with or without prejudice; and (2) final judgment herein after the completion and
15 exhaustion of all appeals, rehearings, remands, trials, or reviews of this Action,
16 including the time limits for filing any motions or applications for extension of
17 time pursuant to applicable law.

18 **5. DESIGNATING PROTECTED MATERIAL**

19 5.1 Exercise of Restraint and Care in Designating Material for
20 Protection. Each Party or Non-Party that designates information or items
21 for protection under this Order must take care to limit any such designation
22 to specific material that qualifies under the appropriate standards. The
23 Designating Party must designate for protection only those parts of
24 material, documents, items, or oral or written communications that qualify
25 so that other portions of the material, documents, items, or communications
26 for which protection is not warranted are not swept unjustifiably within the
27 ambit of this Order.

28 Mass, indiscriminate, or routinized designations are prohibited.

Designations that are shown to be clearly unjustified or that have been made for an improper purpose (e.g., to unnecessarily encumber the case development process or to impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) may expose the Designating Party to sanctions.

If it comes to a Designating Party's attention that information or items that it designated for protection do not qualify for protection, that Designating Party must promptly notify all other Parties that it is withdrawing the inapplicable designation.

5.2 Manner and Timing of Designations. Except as otherwise provided in this Order (see, e.g., second paragraph of section 5.2(a) below), or as otherwise stipulated or ordered, Disclosure or Discovery Material that qualifies for protection under this Order must be clearly so designated before the material is disclosed or produced.

Designation in conformity with this Order requires:

(a) for information in documentary form (e.g., paper or electronic documents, but excluding transcripts of depositions or other pretrial or trial proceedings), that the Producing Party affix at a minimum, the legend "CONFIDENTIAL" to each page that contains protected material. If only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the margins).

A Party or Non-Party that makes original documents available for inspection need not designate them for protection until after the inspecting Party has indicated which documents it would like copied and produced. During the inspection and before the designation, all of the material made available for inspection will be deemed "CONFIDENTIAL." After the inspecting Party has identified the documents it wants copied and produced, the Producing Party must determine which documents, or portions thereof, qualify for protection under this

Order. Then, before producing the specified documents, the Producing Party must affix the “CONFIDENTIAL” legend to each page that contains Protected Material. If only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the margins).

(b) for testimony given in depositions that the Designating Party identify the Disclosure or Discovery Material on the record, before the close of the deposition all protected testimony.

(c) for information produced in some form other than documentary and for any other tangible items, that the Producing Party affix in a prominent place on the exterior of the container or containers in which the information is stored the legend “CONFIDENTIAL.” If only a portion or portions of the information warrants protection, the Producing Party, to the extent practicable, will identify the protected portion(s).

5.3 Inadvertent Failures to Designate. If timely corrected, an inadvertent failure to designate qualified information or items does not, standing alone, waive the Designating Party’s right to secure protection under this Order for such material. Upon timely correction of a designation, the Receiving Party must make reasonable efforts to assure that the material is treated in accordance with the provisions of this Order.

6. **CHALLENGING CONFIDENTIALITY DESIGNATIONS**

6.1 Timing of Challenges. Any Party or Non-Party may challenge a designation of confidentiality at any time that is consistent with the Court’s Scheduling Order.

6.2 Meet and Confer. The Challenging Party will initiate the dispute resolution process (and, if necessary, file a discovery motion) under Local Rule 25137.1 et seq. and with Judge Stevenson’s Civil Procedures.

6.3 The burden of persuasion in any such challenge proceeding will be on the Designating Party. Frivolous challenges, and those made for an improper purpose (e.g., to harass or impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) may expose the Challenging Party to sanctions. Unless the Designating Party has waived or withdrawn the confidentiality designation, all parties will continue to afford the material in question the level of protection to which it is entitled under the Producing Party's designation until the Court rules on the challenge.

7. **ACCESS TO AND USE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL**

7.1 Basic Principles. A Receiving Party may use Protected Material that is disclosed or produced by another Party or by a Non-Party in connection with this Action only for prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this Action. Protected Material shall not be used, directly or indirectly, by any person, for any business, commercial or competitive purposes or for any purpose whatsoever other than solely for the preparation for and trial of this action in accordance with the provisions of this Order. Such Protected Material may be disclosed only to the categories of persons and under the conditions described in this Order. When the Action has been terminated, a Receiving Party must comply with the provisions of section 13 below (FINAL DISPOSITION).

Protected Material must be stored and maintained by a Receiving Party at a location and in a secure manner that ensures that access is limited to the persons authorized under this Order.

7.2 Disclosure of "CONFIDENTIAL" Information or Items. Unless otherwise ordered by the court or permitted in writing by the Designating Party, a Receiving Party may disclose any information or item designated "CONFIDENTIAL" only to:

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- (a) the Receiving Party's Outside Counsel of Record in this Action, as well as employees of said Outside Counsel of Record to whom it is reasonably necessary to disclose the information for this Action;
- (b) the officers, directors, and employees (including House Counsel) of the Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action;
- (c) Experts (as defined in this Order) of the Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" (Exhibit A);
- (d) the Court and its personnel;
- (e) court reporters and their staff to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" (Exhibit A);
- (f) professional jury or trial consultants, mock jurors, and Professional Vendors to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" (Exhibit A);
- (g) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a custodian or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information;
- (h) during their depositions, witnesses, and attorneys for witnesses, in the Action to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary provided: (1) the deposing party requests that the witness sign the form attached as Exhibit A hereto; and (2) they will not be permitted to keep any confidential information unless they sign the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" (Exhibit A), unless otherwise agreed by the Designating Party or ordered by the court. Pages of transcribed deposition testimony or exhibits to depositions that reveal Protected

Material may be separately bound by the court reporter and may not be disclosed to anyone except as permitted under this Stipulated Protective Order; and

(i) any mediator or settlement officer, and their supporting personnel, mutually agreed upon by any of the parties engaged in settlement discussions.

8. **PROTECTED MATERIAL SUBPOENAED OR ORDERED PRODUCED IN OTHER LITIGATION**

If a Party is served with a subpoena or a court order issued in other litigation that compels disclosure of any information or items designated in this Action as “CONFIDENTIAL,” that Party must:

(a) promptly notify in writing the Designating Party. Such notification will include a copy of the subpoena or court order;

(b) promptly notify in writing the party who caused the subpoena or order to issue in the other litigation that some or all of the material covered by the subpoena or order is subject to this Protective Order. Such notification will include a copy of this Stipulated Protective Order; and

(c) cooperate with respect to all reasonable procedures sought to be pursued by the Designating Party whose Protected Material may be affected.

If the Designating Party timely seeks a protective order, the Party served with the subpoena or court order will not produce any information designated in this action as “CONFIDENTIAL” before a determination by the court from which the subpoena or order issued, unless the Party has obtained the Designating Party’s permission. The Designating Party will bear the burden and expense of seeking protection in that court of its confidential material and

nothing in these provisions should be construed as authorizing or encouraging a Receiving Party in this Action to disobey a lawful directive from another court.

9. **A NON-PARTY'S PROTECTED MATERIAL SOUGHT TO BE PRODUCED IN THIS LITIGATION**

9.1 Application. The terms of this Order are applicable to information produced by a Non-Party in this Action and designated as "CONFIDENTIAL." Such information produced by Non-Parties in connection with this litigation is protected by the remedies and relief provided by this Order. Nothing in these provisions should be construed as prohibiting a Non-Party from seeking additional protections.

9.2 Notification. In the event that a Party is required, by a valid discovery request, to produce a Non-Party's confidential information in its possession, and the Party is subject to an agreement with the Non-Party not to produce the Non-Party's confidential information, then the Party will:

- (a) promptly notify in writing the Requesting Party and the Non-Party that some or all of the information requested is subject to a confidentiality agreement with a Non-Party;
- (b) promptly provide the Non-Party with a copy of the Stipulated Protective Order in this Action, the relevant discovery request(s), and a reasonably specific description of the information requested; and
- (c) make the information requested available for inspection by the Non-Party, if requested.

9.3 Conditions of Production. If the Non-Party fails to seek a protective order from this court within 14 days of receiving the notice and accompanying information, the Receiving Party may produce the Non-Party's confidential information responsive to the discovery request. If the Non-Party timely seeks a protective order, the Receiving

1 Party will not produce any information in its possession or control that
2 is subject to the confidentiality agreement with the Non-Party before a
3 determination by the court. Absent a court order to the contrary, the
4 Non-Party will bear the burden and expense of seeking protection in this
5 court of its Protected Material.

6 **10. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL**

7 If a Receiving Party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it has
8 disclosed Protected Material to any person or in any circumstance not authorized
9 under this Stipulated Protective Order, the Receiving Party must immediately (a)
10 notify in writing the Designating Party of the unauthorized disclosures, (b) use
11 its best efforts to retrieve all unauthorized copies of the Protected Material, (c)
12 inform the person or persons to whom unauthorized disclosures were made of all
13 the terms of this Order, and (d) request such person or persons to execute the
14 “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” that is attached hereto as
15 Exhibit A.

16 **11. INADVERTENT PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED OR**
17 **OTHERWISE PROTECTED MATERIAL**

18 When a Producing Party gives notice to Receiving Parties that certain
19 inadvertently produced material is subject to a claim of privilege or other
20 protection, the obligations of the Receiving Parties are those set forth in Federal
21 Rule of Civil Procedure 26(b)(5)(B). This provision is not intended to modify
22 whatever procedure may be established in an e-discovery order that provides for
23 production without prior privilege review. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence
24 502(d) and (e), insofar as the parties reach an agreement on the effect of
25 disclosure of a communication or information covered by the attorney-client
26 privilege or work product protection, the parties may incorporate their agreement
27 in the stipulated protective order submitted to the court.
28

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5 Park Plaza, Suite 1100
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12. **MISCELLANEOUS**

12.1 **Right to Further Relief.** Nothing in this Order abridges the right of any person to seek its modification by the Court in the future.

12.2 **Right to Assert Other Objections.** By stipulating to the entry of this Protective Order no Party waives any right it otherwise would have to object to disclosing or producing any information or item on any ground not addressed in this Stipulated Protective Order. Similarly, no Party waives any right to object on any ground to use in evidence of any of the material covered by this Protective Order.

12.3 **Filing Protected Material.** A Party that seeks to file under seal any Protected Material must comply with Civil Local Rule 14179-5. Protected Material may only be filed under seal pursuant to a court order authorizing the sealing of the specific Protected Material at issue. If a Party's request to file Protected Material under seal is denied by the court, then the Receiving Party may file the information in the public record unless otherwise instructed by the court.

12.4 Neither the entry of this Order, nor the designation of any information, document, or the like as "Confidential," nor the failure to make such designation, shall constitute evidence with respect to any issue in this action.

13. **FINAL DISPOSITION**

After the final disposition of this Action, as defined in paragraph 4, within 60 days, each Receiving Party must return all Protected Material to the Producing Party. As used in this subdivision, "all Protected Material" includes all copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries, and any other format reproducing or capturing any of the Protected Material. The Receiving Party must submit a written certification to the Producing Party (and, if not the same person or entity, to the Designating Party) by the 60 day deadline that (1) identifies (by category,

where appropriate) all the Protected Material that was returned and (2) affirms that the Receiving Party has not retained any copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries or any other format reproducing or capturing any of the Protected Material. Notwithstanding this provision, Counsel are entitled to retain an archival copy of all pleadings, motion papers, trial, deposition, and hearing transcripts, legal memoranda, correspondence, deposition and trial exhibits, expert reports, attorney work product, and consultant and expert work product, even if such materials contain Protected Material. Any such archival copies that contain or constitute Protected Material remain subject to this Protective Order as set forth in Section 4 (DURATION).

14. **VIOLATION**

Any willful violation of this Order may be punished by civil or criminal contempt proceedings, financial or evidentiary sanctions, reference to disciplinary authorities, or other appropriate action at the discretion of the Court. IT IS SO STIPULATED, THROUGH COUNSEL OF RECORD.

DATED: August 14, 2024

/s/ Jeremy S. Golden

Jeremy S. Golden
Attorney for Plaintiff NAZIR POPAL

DATED: August 14, 2024

/s/ Joel D. Brodfuehrer

Joel D. Brodfuehrer
Attorneys for Defendant
IQ DATA INTERNATIONAL, INC.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: August 15, 2024

JEREMY D. PETERSON
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

EXHIBIT A

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT TO BE BOUND

I, _____ **[full name]**, of _____
[full address], declare under penalty of perjury that I have read in its entirety
and understand the Stipulated Protective Order that was issued by the United
States District Court for the Central District of California on [date] in the case of
_____ **[insert case name and number]**. I agree to comply with and to be
bound by all the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order and I understand and
acknowledge that failure to so comply could expose me to sanctions and
punishment in the nature of contempt. I solemnly promise that I will not disclose
in any manner any information or item that is subject to this Stipulated Protective
Order to any person or entity except in strict compliance with the provisions of
this Order.

I further agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the United States District
Court for the Central District of California for the purpose of enforcing the terms
of this Stipulated Protective Order, even if such enforcement proceedings occur
after termination of this action. I hereby appoint

_____ **[full name]** of
_____ **[full address and telephone
number]** as my California agent for service of process in connection with this
action or any proceedings related to enforcement of this Stipulated Protective
Order.

Date: _____

City and State where signed: _____

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____